

VZCZCXRO1572

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DE RUEHFR #0486/01 0390832

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4760

INFO RUEHAB/AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN IMMEDIATE 1056

RUEHAE/AMEMBASSY ASMARA IMMEDIATE 0354

RUEHRY/AMEMBASSY CONAKRY IMMEDIATE 1005

RUEHSB/AMEMBASSY HARARE IMMEDIATE 0409

RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1137

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 000486

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/02/2017

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SUBJECT: TOUR D'HORIZON WITH MFA AFRICA DIRECTOR

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Karl Hofmann. Reasons 1.4b,d

11. (C) Summary: French MFA A/S-Equivalent for Africa Gliniasty told DCM on February 1 that France had not invited President Mugabe of Zimbabwe to the February 13-15 Africa-France Summit. Gliniasty confided that the Zimbabwean delegation had complained vocally in the course of the AU Summit about Mugabe's exclusion. Regarding Sudan, Gliniasty feared President Bashir would harden his tone with respect to the hybrid UN-AU mission to Darfur following the rejection of Bashir's candidacy for the AU Chair. Gliniasty suggested a "ruthless" sanctions policy may be necessary. He advocated targeted sanctions on individual Janjaweed leaders and others rather than sanctions directed against the Khartoum regime. Gliniasty noted Eritrean interest in U.S. views on Darfur mediation efforts in Asmara. Apprised of the continuing detention of Embassy Asmara FSN employees, Gliniasty requested further background and offered to engage on their behalf. (See Guidance Request in Paragraph 3.)

12. (C) Summary Cont'd: Gliniasty viewed developments in Somalia positively, calling the Ethiopian intervention a total success. France favored linking EU assistance to a TFG commitment to dialogue and inclusive government, but Gliniasty considered EC Commissioner Michel's approach unreasonable. He was grateful that Michel and TFG President Yusuf had reached agreement on a more realistic roadmap for reconciliation during the AU Summit. On Cote d'Ivoire, Gliniasty struck an upbeat note on direct talks between President Gbagbo and Force Nouvelles leader Soro, but insisted that direct dialogue was insufficient without an accelerated schedule for elections. Gliniasty argued French forces remained necessary to stave off bloodshed. End Summary.

3 (C) Guidance Request: Embassy seeks guidance regarding MFA request for information about FSN detentions in Asmara and offer by AF A/S-Equivalent to engage the Government of Eritrea on the matter, as appropriate.

14. (SBU) The DCM hosted MFA AF A/S-Equivalent Jean de Gliniasty and AF PDAS-Equivalent Caroline Dumas for a luncheon discussion on February 1. Africa Watcher attended as notetaker. Discussion covered the February 13-15 Africa-France Summit, Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, and Guinea.

Africa-France Summit: No Mugabe

¶15. (SBU) DCM asked Gliniasty about preparation for the 13-15 February Africa-France Summit in Cannes. Gliniasty remarked that the program was only lightly scripted, in part from recognition that Chirac would want flexibility as he mixes with an anticipated 40 heads of state. Gliniasty added there would be a few ad hoc mini-summits, including a sidebar dedicated to Darfur.

¶16. (C) Asked how France was handling the question of attendance by Zimbabwean President Mugabe, Gliniasty conceded that France had originally sought to issue an invitation on the condition that Mugabe agree in advance to decline and instead send a personal representative. However the GoZ rejected that approach and France consequently did not send an invitation. The GoZ remained upset, according to Gliniasty, who added that the Zimbabwean delegation had complained vocally at the the AU Summit in Addis Ababa. Alluding to strong objections within the EU to Mugabe's presence, Gliniasty admitted that French views on Zimbabwe were "among the more moderate" in Europe. Mugabe, for all his faults and disastrous domestic policies, was not an agent of regional destabilization, Gliniasty argued. Mugabe moreover remained an iconic figure among many Africans.

¶17. (C) Asked whether Rwandan President Kagame would attend, Gliniasty said Kigali had yet to respond to the invitation France had sent before the Rwandan president broke off formal diplomatic relations with Paris. (Comment: Gliniasty implied the French invitation was still valid, but Kagame would have to take the next step.)

Sudan: A Call for Ruthless Sanctions?

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¶18. (C) Stability in Darfur hinged, according to Gliniasty, on the relationship between Sudanese President Bashir and Chadian President Deby. Bashir was often maladroit, Gliniasty remarked, yet, ironically, Deby could be equally if not more inflexible than the Sudanese leader. Noting the 1/24 letter from the UN to Bashir regarding the three-phased AU-UN hybrid deployment, Gliniasty mentioned he had conveyed to Bashir at the AU Summit that Sudan should weigh its response carefully, there being little margin for error. Gliniasty worried however that Bashir's approach to Darfur could harden further after his failure to obtain the AU Chairmanship. If so, there would be no choice except the "ruthless" application of international sanctions, Gliniasty declared.

¶19. (C) In the event of additional sanctions, Gliniasty recommended targeting warlords in Darfur. He claimed there were divisions emerging among Janjaweed commanders, with some now anxious for their own futures. Gliniasty believed that targeted sanctions -- what he called "humanitarian sanctions" -- were often highly effective. In the case of Cote d'Ivoire, Gliniasty noted Charles Ble Goude, the once incendiary leader of the Young Patriots, was now striving to modify his behavior and curry favor with the international community in Abidjan; Ble Goude had yet to overcome the psychological shock of being refused entry into Europe on account of his inclusion on a travel ban list. Access to Europe was an important measure of stature for Africans, Gliniasty remarked. Gliniasty was more sanguine with regard to what he termed "political sanctions" targeting the Sudanese regime. Noting Bashir's fears about Western designs of regime change for Sudan, Gliniasty cautioned that "political sanctions" could cause the Khartoum regime "to crystalize" along a hard line. Such sanctions, he suggested, were best invoked as a threat; Gliniasty said he was all for "sabre-rattling," using the English phrase, though he then added the qualifier of sabre-rattling "with prudence."

Eritrea: France Offers to Help on FSNs

¶10. (C) Gliniasty said that he had fielded inquiries from Eritrean representatives about how the U.S. viewed Asmara's efforts to mediate on Darfur. Gliniasty quipped that if the U.S. truly opposed Eritrean efforts on Darfur, Asmara would already know so and in no uncertain terms. Told of the continuing difficulties in the U.S.-Eritrean relationship, e.g. the expulsion of USAID and the continuing detention, since 2001, of U.S. Foreign Service Nationals in Asmara, Gliniasty's tone changed markedly. Gliniasty said he regretted having missed an opportunity to chide the Eritreans on their treatment of U.S. embassy personnel. He requested additional information that the U.S. could provide, offering to raise the matter in future dealings with Eritrea. Gliniasty also suggested that he could coordinate with UN Special Envoy Eliasson on how to pressure the Eritreans. (See Guidance Request in Para 3 above.)

Somalia -- Optimal Outcome

¶11. (C) Gliniasty lauded developments in Somalia. He described the Ethiopian mission as a "total success." He admitted some discomfort with the U.S. airstrikes, but did not retract his overall positive assessment of the approach taken by the USG as embodied in SCR 1725 (2006). France did favor conditionality with respect to assistance as a way to induce outreach and dialogue on the part of the TFG. That said, the approach taken by Louis Michel, EC Commissioner on Development and Humanitarian Aid, had been unreasonable. Gliniasty understood Michel, with the support of AF A/S Frazer, had reached an accommodation with TFG President Abdullahi Yusuf on the margins of the AU Summit. Michel would now relax the demand for a National Reconciliation Conference prior to the release of EU funds on the understanding that Yusuf would take formal measures within two weeks to convoke the Conference.

Cote d'Ivoire: Dialogue Should Track With Elections

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¶12. (C) Gliniasty offered a mostly positive evaluation of the new phase in the peace process. The January meeting of the International Working Group had mostly gone well. South Africa was predictably championing dialogue. Dialogue however had to be coupled with accelerated elections, in the French view. Gliniasty hoped it would be possible to reconcile the two positions. Gbagbo, he noted, had tried to use UNSCR 1721 (2006) to legitimize his own plan for direct dialogue. Gbagbo may have erred, however, by underestimating the negotiating acumen of Forces Nouvelles leader Guillaume Soro. Soro would now push for a more rigorous application of UNSCR 1721 than Gbagbo would prefer, while Gbagbo would make every effort to corrupt Soro. Regarding the deployment of French forces to Cote d'Ivoire under Operation Licorne, Gliniasty admitted the French Ministry of Defense favored pulling back. The MOD no longer believed that the Licorne presence was indispensable in preventing a bloodbath. Gliniasty however rejected that analysis.

Wade -- Democrat with an Authoritarian Flair

¶13. (C) DCM noted disquieting signals that Senegal might again defer presidential elections. Gliniasty, who served during 2003 as French ambassador to Senegal and The Gambia, commented on President Wade's contradictory character: Wade's sincere democratic convictions were in conflict with his authoritarian nature. Reason generally prevailed, Gliniasty claimed. That said, Wade, poorly advised by a band of advisers whom Gliniasty branded as brutes, might have

become more prone to blunders.

Guinea: Where's the Military Leadership?

¶14. (C) Glniasty remained concerned about developments in Guinea, despite the end of the general strike that had paralyzed the country. Conte's succession was still a problem and the military lacked constructive leadership. The officer corps was "Stalinist," he said. Guinea suffered from the lack of military leaders trained in the West.

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